# F.W. Hutchison
# 1871-1953

**Sir George Williams Art Galleries, Concordia University, Montreal**
**May 12 - June 5, 1982**

**On the Road to Murray Bay**, cat. no. 26, fig. 1

Sponsored by the Loyola and Sir George Williams Alumni Associations of Concordia University

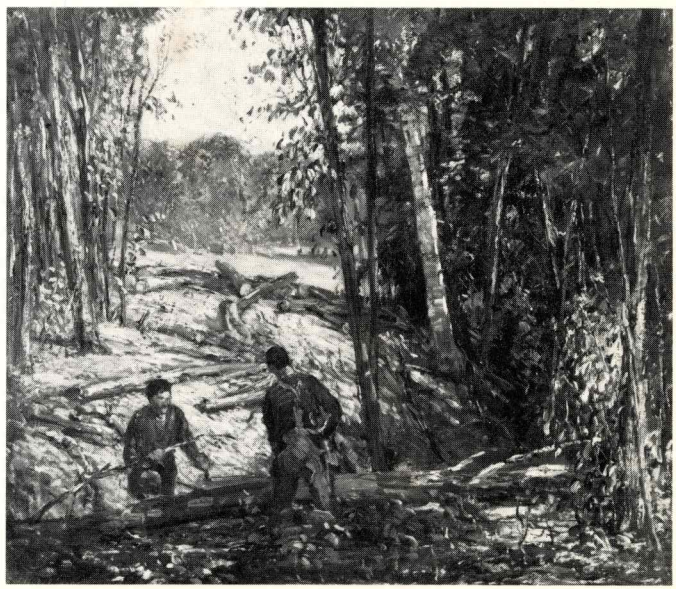
# F.W. Hutchison
## 1871-1953

Frederick William Hutchison's painting career spanned approximately forty-five years, from 1895 to 1940. Born in Montreal in 1871, he moved to New York City in 1903-04 where he taught at the College of the City of New York until 1939. Despite his many years in the United States, Hutchison's major aesthetic concern was the interpretation of the Canadian landscape, specifically Quebec. Although he did some portraits, the artist consistently preferred to paint nature in all its aspects; urban and still life subjects never seem to have appealed to him.

Hutchison's two main painting locales were the Hudson environs thirty-five miles west of Montreal and Charlevoix County on the Lower St. Lawrence River. To date, not a single work of an American subject has emerged. His attraction to the Hudson landscape is demonstrated by a number of watercolours he painted as a young man studying at the Art Association of Montreal. Throughout the New York years Hutchison regularly returned to the family residence in Hudson Heights and settled there permanently after his retirement from teaching in 1939.

It is not known exactly when Hutchison began painting in Charlevoix. The region may have been suggested to him by William Brymner (1855-1925), his teacher at the Art Association of Montreal, who had painted there in the late nineteenth century. But also his close friend, the artist Clarence Gagnon (1881-1942), lived at Baie St. Paul on and off between 1909 and 1924. The painting **October Snow, Baie St. Paul** (cat. no. 5) in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario and dated c. 1912 is thus far Hutchison's earliest known work painted in this region. Until the mid-1940's the artist rented the same red brick cottage in Baie St. Paul and was, therefore, one of the original group of enthusiasts who made Charlevoix a regular painting ground. Others included A.Y. Jackson (1882-1974), Arthur Lismer (1885-1969), Albert H. Robinson (1881-1956), Randolph Hewton (1888-1960), Kathleen Daly (b. 1898), George Pepper (1903-1962), Edwin Holgate (1892-1977), Robert W. Pilot (1898-1967), Sarah Robertson (1891-1948), Mabel May (1884-1971), Rita Mount (1888-1967), Herbert Raine (1875-1951) and Anne Savage (1896-1971). American painters also numbered among the visitors; the most prominent was William Glackens (1870-1938).

To interpret these rural settings Hutchison chose an Impressionist manner of approach no doubt due to both his studying with the American painter, William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) and his studies at the Académie Julian in Paris (1899-1901). By the beginning of the twentieth century Impressionism was well received and highly popular both in Europe and North America. Hutchison's concern for colour, light and atmosphere place him within the context of genera-

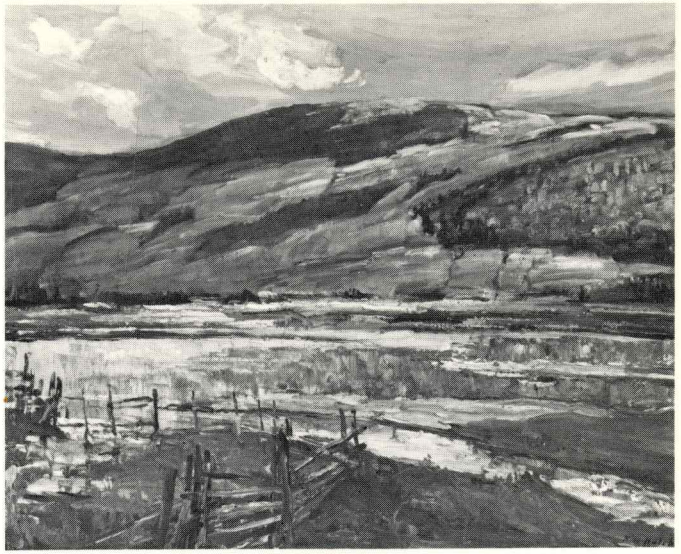


**Felling Trees on Mount Victoria, Hudson Heights, Quebec**, cat. no. 6, fig. 2

tional Impressionism in Canada while his portrayal of inhabited, picturesque countryside places him within a particular Quebec attitude to landscape. This attitude is in sharp contrast to Ontario's Group of Seven who sought to represent untamed, uncivilized wilderness. Typically Hutchison painted "domesticated" canvases of Charlevoix with its rolling hills, small villages, rustic farms and cultivated fields. However, his paintings **High Tide, bas de la Baie, Baie St. Paul** (cat. no. 21, fig. 3) and **Winter Birches: Hudson Heights** (cat. no. 29) are unusual for the artist for their lack of human reference.

**Untitled (Horses and Sleighs in a Winter Landscape)** (cat. no. 1) dated c. 1887 is Hutchison's earliest known work and aptly demonstrates what was to be his lifelong preoccupation with the inhabited landscape. Though tightly composed and painted, this small work foreshadows later paintings like **Felling Trees on Mount Victoria, Hudson Heights, Quebec** (cat. no. 6, fig. 2) which includes figures but now reveals a looser handling and a greater emphasis upon colour and light. Painted c. 1915, it indicates that Hutchison had firmly adapted the devices of Impressionism.

In addition to his concern for the populated landscape, the artist also consistently demonstrated a fascination for French-Canadian architecture. Sometimes farmhouses, barns and sheds are components of the landscape as in **October Snow, Baie St. Paul** (cat. no. 5) and **The Melting Snow** (cat. no. 23), while at other times they become the dominant motif. Thus there is a theme in Hutchison's work that could be called his "house portraits." This is exemplified by **Untitled (Old House, Hudson Environs)** (cat. no. 8) and **Untitled (Yellow House, Charlevoix)** (cat. no. 14). Furthermore, his appreciation of Quebec architecture extends to the villages themselves when he paints "streetscenes" like **Baie St. Paul-Midi** (cat. no. 10), **Untitled (Street in Baie St. Paul)** (cat. no. 12) and **At Mass, Baie St. Paul** (cat. no. 16). This particular thematic preference relates Hutchison to his Quebec contemporaries, Albert H. Robinson and Clarence Gagnon. In all of Hutchison's views the strength of the composition is brought about by the arrangement and emphasis on the architectural forms described in brilliant sunlight.



**High Tide, bas de la Baie, Baie St. Paul**, cat. no. 21, fig. 3

The artist also painted large slices of the landscape, no doubt prompted by the more mountainous topography of Charlevoix itself. While the "house portraits" and "streetscenes" were painted from a low vantage point, resulting in frieze-like compositions, these panoramic views are more recessional and expansive. This is demonstrated in **St. Hilarion in Summer** (cat. no. 24), **On the Road to Murray Bay** (cat. no. 26) in the collection of The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and **Winter, Charlevoix County** (cat. no. 28). Interestingly, these works closely relate to similar views by A.Y. Jackson.

The later canvases represent the culmination of Hutchison's painting career in their broader use of colour, in the looser brushwork and the choice of wider vistas of landscape often painted on larger-sized canvases. While Hutchison was always concerned with seasonal and hourly changes in light and atmosphere, his paintings of the 1920's and 1930's display distinct differences in surface texture when compared to his earlier works. In the c. 1910-15 painting **Untitled (Summer, Hudson Heights)** (cat. no. 4) the pigment is quite dry and he seems to have dragged his brush across the canvas. By contrast, in the c. 1935 **On the Road to**

**Murray Bay** (cat. no. 26, fig. 1) the oil has been thinned considerably and the pigment applied in broader, longer sweeps. This looseness and spontaneity of handling help distinguish earlier from later works.

The name F.W. Hutchison is not well known today in the history of Canadian art. During his lifetime the artist gained some recognition and was favourably received in the Montreal press by such writers as S. Morgan-Powell and Robert Ayre. He was represented in Montreal at various times by three commercial galleries: W. Scott & Sons, the Stevens Art Gallery and Watson Art Galleries. He had one-man exhibitions with each of them as well as showings at The Arts Club in 1919 and at the Art Association of Montreal in 1919 and 1940. Among the several public collections where Hutchison is represented, the largest holding of his work is in the Musée du Québec. Hutchison received further public recognition with his election to the prestigious National Academy of Design in New York in 1935 and to the Royal Canadian Academy in 1937.

Considering that Hutchison received attention and support during his painting career, why is he relatively unknown today? Why are we more aware of the achievements of artists like Clarence Gagnon, Albert H. Robinson and Robert W. Pilot? An obvious explanation seems to lie in the matter of Hutchison's dual residency. He spent the majority of each year from 1903 until 1939 teaching in New York City, with a few months spent in the Hudson Heights area and in Charlevoix. Consequently, the artist was partially known to Canadians and partially to Americans. His problem, in short, was largely a matter of visibility.

The purpose of this exhibition is to bring to the public, for the first time since 1949, a retrospective group of works by an artist who fits well within the mainstream of early twentieth-century Quebec landscape painting. In this way we can better understand many of the general aesthetic concerns of that time. Today, Hutchison's paintings remain fresh and vigorous, visual documents of rural life in Quebec in the early decades of this century.

Stephanie A. Thomas
Assistant Curator

## Biography

| | |
|---|---|
| 1871 | Born in Montreal March 13th |
| c. 1889-91 | Studied with William Brymner, Art Association of Montreal (AAM) |
| c. 1891-94 | Worked as engraver on steel plates at Burland Banknote Co., Ottawa |
| c. 1894-98 | Worked at American Banknote Co., New York and studied with William Merritt Chase at Art Students League and Chase School of Art |
| 1898-99 | Returned to Montreal and studied again at AAM winning scholarship in life class division |
| 1899-1901 | Studied at Académie Julian, Paris, with Jean-Paul Laurens and Benjamin Constant |
| 1901 | Returned to Montreal and joined Pen & Pencil Club |
| c. 1903-04 | Moved to New York and resumed studies at Art Students League |
| 1905 | Employed at College of the City of New York teaching art until 1939 |
| 1906 | Joined the Salmagundi Club, New York |
| 1913 | Joined The Arts Club, Montreal |
| 1914-15 | Exhibited **The Melting Snow** in Canadian Patriotic Fund exhibition |
| 1915 | Exhibited **A Northern River** in Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco |
| 1919 | One-man exhibitions, The Arts Club and AAM |
| 1923 | Elected associate academian, National Academy of Design (NAD), New York |
| 1928 | One-man exhibition, W. Scott & Sons, Montreal<br>Travelled with Clarence and Lucille Gagnon through France, Italy and Switzerland during summer |
| 1933 | One-man exhibition, W. Scott & Sons |
| 1935 | Elected academician, NAD |
| 1937 | Elected honorary non-resident academician, Royal Canadian Academy |
| 1939 | Exhibited **The Melting Snow** in New York World's Fair<br>Returned to Montreal permanently |
| 1940 | One-man exhibitions, Stevens Art Gallery, Montreal and AAM |
| 1946 | One-man exhibition, Stevens Art Gallery |
| 1949 | One-man exhibition, Watson Art Galleries, Montreal |
| 1953 | Died in Hudson Heights |

## Acknowledgements

This exhibition is the outcome of my research on F.W. Hutchison which was presented as a Master of Fine Arts thesis at Concordia University. Therefore, I would like to first thank those individuals who were most closely involved with supervising my work: Profs. J. Russell Harper, Donald F.P. Andrus, Laurier Lacroix and Sandra Paikowsky.

This retrospective exhibition would not have been possible without the support of many individuals. I am most indebted to the Loyola and Sir George Williams Alumni Associations of Concordia University who have made the project possible through their financial assistance. In particular, I would like to mention Peggy Carroll, Elizabeth Ostro, Matthew Ram and Joan Richardson. Also, I would like to thank the Galleries' Curator, Sandra Paikowsky, for allowing me the opportunity to organize this retrospective. Her constant encouragement, advice and patience were invaluable. Also, my thanks to Eileen Peterson, Secretary to the Galleries, for her hard work and faith.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the lenders to this exhibition. Without their support this project would never have been realized. To all those collectors of Hutchison's work whom I have visited over the years and to the members of the Hutchison family, may I take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to see your pictures and for sharing your memories.

S.A.T.
April, 1982

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Designed & printed by Richard Hull Reg'd., Huntingdon, Quebec

# Catalogue

1. **Untitled (Horses and Sleighs in a Winter Landscape)**, c. 1887
oil on board
5 5/8 × 7 5/8 in. / 14.3 × 19.4 cm
Private collection, Hudson

2. **Untitled (Horse and Sleigh)**, c. 1895-99
sepia on paper
21 1/4 × 29 1/4 in. / 54.0 × 74.3 cm
Private collection, Montreal

3. **Roscoff 1900**
oil on board
4 1/2 × 7 in. / 11.4 × 17.8 cm
Private collection, Montreal

4. **Untitled (Summer, Hudson Heights)**, c. 1910-15
oil on canvas
17 1/2 × 22 1/2 in. / 44.5 × 57.2 cm
Private collection, Montreal

5. **October Snow, Baie St. Paul**, c. 1912
oil on canvas
29 × 35 1/2 in. / 73.7 × 90.2 cm
Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Frank P. Wood, Toronto

6. **Felling Trees on Mount Victoria, Hudson Heights, Quebec**, c. 1915
oil on canvas
23 1/2 × 27 1/2 in. / 59.7 × 69.9 cm
Private collection, Montreal

7. **Untitled (Bridge over Stream)**, c. 1915
oil on board
10 ×8 in. / 25.4 × 20.3 cm
Private collection, Montreal

8. **Untitled (Old House, Hudson Environs)**, c. 1915
oil on canvas
12 7/8 × 15 1/2 in. / 32.7 ×39.4 cm
Private collection, Hudson Heights

9. **"The Wilderness," Hudson Heights**, c. 1920
oil on canvas
27 1/4 × 23 1/4 in. / 69.2 × 59.1 cm
Private collection, Hudson

10. **Baie St. Paul - Midi**, c. 1920-25
oil on canvas
15 1/2 × 19 1/2 in. / 39.4 × 49.5 cm
Private collection, Westmount

11. **Baie St. Paul - Road Shrine**, c. 1920-25
oil on canvas
15 3/4 ×19 1/2 in. / 40.0 × 49.5 cm
Private collection, Westmount

12. **Untitled (Street in Baie St. Paul)**, c. 1920-25
oil on board
8 × 10 in. / 20.3 × 25.4 cm
Private collection, Montreal

13. **En route to Murray Bay**, c. 1925-30
oil on canvas
16 × 20 in. / 40.6 × 50.8 cm
Warda Drummond, Montreal

14. **Untitled ( Yellow House, Charlevoix)**, c. 1925-30
oil on canvas
15 1/2 × 19 5/8 in. / 39.4 × 49.9 cm
Private collection, Montreal

15. **Assisi**, 1928
oil on board
10 × 13 1/4 in. / 25.4 × 33.7 cm
Private collection, Hudson

16. **At Mass, Baie St. Paul**, c. 1930
gouache on paper
5 × 7 1/4 in. / 12.7 × 18.4 cm
T.H. Edwards, Montreal

17. **Barachois Bay**, c. 1930
oil on canvas
24 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. / 62.2 × 74.9 cm
Private collection, Westmount

18. **The Lower St. Lawrence**, c. 1930
oil on board
5 3/8 × 6 1/8 in./ 13.7 × 15.6 cm
Private collection, Westmount

19. **St. Hilarion, Quebec**, c. 1930
gouache on paper
5 × 7 1/4 in. / 12.7 × 18.4 cm
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Klinkhoff, Montreal

20. **Untitled (Farms, Charlevoix)**, c. 1930
oil on canvas
24 3/4 × 29 1/2 in. / 62.9 × 74.9 cm
Private collection, Hudson

21. **High Tide, bas de la Baie, Baie St. Paul**, c. 1930-35
oil on canvas
23 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. / 59.7 × 74.9 cm
Private collection, Montreal

22. **Marsh Haying**, c. 1930-35
oil on canvas
25 × 30 in. / 63.5 × 76.2 cm
The National Gallery of Canada, R.C.A. Diploma Work, Ottawa

23. **The Melting Snow**, c. 1930-35
oil on canvas
25 1/4 × 30 1/4 in. / 64.1 × 76.8 cm
Colette Rousseau, Quebec

24. **St. Hilarion in Summer**, c. 1930-35
oil on canvas
12 × 16 in. / 30.5 × 40.6 cm
Warda Drummond, Montreal

25. **Village Street in Baie St. Paul**, c. 1930-35
oil on canvas
16 × 20 in. / 40.6 × 50.8 cm
Private collection, Montreal

26. **On the Road to Murray Bay**, c. 1935
oil on canvas
40 × 50 in. / 101.6 × 127.0 cm
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Dr. F.J. Shepherd fund

27. **The Road to Murray Bay**, c. 1935
oil on canvas
24 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. / 62.2 × 74.9 cm
The Mount Royal Club, Montreal

28. **Winter, Charlevoix County**, c. 1935-40
oil on canvas
25 × 32 in. / 63.5 × 81.3 cm
Private collection, Ottawa

29. **Winter Birches: Hudson Heights**, c. 1940
oil on canvas
20 × 26 in. / 50.8 × 66.0 cm
Private collection, Hudson Heights

## CLARENCE A. GAGNON ( 1881-1942)

30. **Portrait of F.W. Hutchison**, 1904
etching & drypoint
5 1/2 × 3 7/8 in. / 14 × 9.7 cm
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of W.S. Maxwell